

CENTRAL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

Tuesday, February 20, 2018
Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue
Fort Smith, Arkansas
3rd Floor

Meeting Minutes

The Fort Smith Central Business Improvement District Commission's regular meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 in the 7th floor board room of the Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Richard Griffin, Chairperson, at 9:34 a.m. and a quorum was noted present. Also in attendance were commissioners Phil White, Lee Ann Vick, Steve Clark, Bill Hanna, Sam Sicard, Rodney Ghan and Jeff Pryor. Others in attendance included Brenda Andrews, Doug Reinert and Jeff Dingman of the City of Fort Smith.

Mr. Ghan moved approval of the minutes of the January 16, 2018 regular meeting. Mr. Pryor seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The commissioners considered the Treasurer's report for the month of January 2018, such documents being previously provided by Mr. Sicard for the commissioners' review. As of January 31, 2018, the Total Cash-on-Hand for the CBID amounted to \$89,720.45. Restricted funds comprise \$23,439.90 of the total cash, \$5,439.90 being previously reserved and \$18,000 designated for reserve representing the three-year pledge of \$6,000 per year to supplement personnel and operating expenses of 64.6 Downtown approved at the January 16, 2018 meeting. The total cash net of restricted funds amounted to \$66,280.55. Mr. Clark moved approval of the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Ghan seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The Commission reviewed the Neighborhood Services report, CBID Business License Report, and Open Permit reports regarding activity in the CBID through the month of January. Mr. Ghan inquired as to the issuance of a business license to the Riverfront Inn at 1021 Garrison Avenue. Staff replied that the business license for the hotel was renewed, and that the corporate ownership of the business changed hands but the property ownership did not.

Doug Reinert, Director of Parks & Recreation provided an update on projects. The Greg Smith River Trail Phase III project awaiting permissions from the US Army Corps of Engineers before it can be completed, but completion is still expected in early to mid-March. Mr. Hanna inquired about a ribbon-cutting, to which Mr. Reinert replied that the staff is tentatively planning a Grand Opening of the new trail section in May. The department staff is preparing the splash pads, canopies and shade structures for the spring season, and will open them up when it is warm enough to do so. Mr. White inquired as to whether picnic tables would be added to Compass Park, and Mr. Reinert replied affirmatively.

Mr. Griffin asked the CBID members if they had considered additional amenities or projects for Compass Park, a notion that may be somewhat dependent on the closing of 1st Street and the adjacent section of North A Street. Mr. White indicated that he would like to see a fountain or water feature added between the Compass Park and the Riverfront (Glass) Pavilion, along with perhaps

some trees. Mr. Griffin noted that the shade structures installed near the splash pad made a big difference in the use of that feature.

Mr. Hanna asked Mr. Reinert about what trail projects are next to be considered. Mr. Reinert explained that he is working with the Utility Department on the May Branch drainage improvement, which will go from the P Street WWTP to Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, and then on to Creekmore Park. Coordinating with this utility project will save the city money on the drainage project as well as the trail project, although it will push the completion timeline for the trail back to 2020 or 2021.

Mr. Griffin recognized Mr. Keith Lau, owner of the property at 1121 Garrison Avenue. Mr. Lau proposed exterior paint colors for the building for CBID approval. Two shades of gray were presented, and Mr. Lau offered a Sherwin Williams color wheel to exhibit the specific “Gauntlet Gray” as the base color and “Mindful Gray” as the accent color. He relayed that he is currently doing demolition inside the building and intends to paint the exterior as he cleans up the property to make it more presentable and highlight its Art Deco style. Mr. Lau will have an event at the building in during the 2018 Steel Horse Rally, and is still looking to secure his end users for the property. The end users may have different ideas for exterior colors and finishes, which will be presented to the CBID if proposed. The meeting packet also included a design concept and site layout, which Mr. Lau indicated are still his ultimate goal for the finished product along with associated landscaping, but his current request is simply for approval of the exterior color. Mr. Ghan moved approval of the proposed colors. Mr. Sicard seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of eight in favor, zero opposed. Mr. White asked Mr. Lau about a timeline for completion of the property improvements. Mr. Lau indicated he did not have a set timeline, but his current interest is making the property look better as he continues to seek end users for the property.

Mr. Griffin encouraged CBID members to be mindful of landscaping items that they approve, particularly as applied to applications for permission to demolish structures in the CBID. Although the city’s Unified Development Ordinance provides landscaping requirements for new construction and remodel projects, the UDO only provides minimal requirements for how a lot is left when a building is demolished. Mr. Griffin encouraged the CBID to exercise its authority to negotiate approval of demolition requests conditioned on specific landscaping considerations. This approach has been used effectively related to some recent projects in the district, but not so much on others.

Mr. Griffin asked the commissioners for any thoughts related to the summary of potential projects proposed in recent years that he provided at the last meeting. The CBID asked to review those items again, and the list will be sent out again with discussion included as an agenda item at the next regular meeting. Mr. Sicard asked about an update on the downtown traffic study. Mr. Griffin relayed that he has visited with Reese Brewer, the new Transportation Director for the Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Ms. Brewer and the MPO will be directing the traffic study, and issued a Request for Proposals from traffic engineers to conduct the study. Only one proposal was received by the deadline, and the decision was made to reissue the RFP in hopes of attracting additional proposals, which are due February 21. The proposed timeline gives the contractor through December, 2018 to complete the traffic study and make recommendations, but the CBID is hopeful it will not take that long. Mr. Sicard asked specifically if evaluation of North A & North B Streets would be included in the traffic study, to which staff replied yes, as well as any other traffic-impacting elements included in the Propelling Downtown Forward plan.

Mr. Sicard asked Mr. Bobby Aldridge of Frontier Engineering to present a discussion of the proposed skateboard/bicycle park on the riverfront. Mr. Aldridge reminded the CBID that the City of Fort Smith has approved and complete the purchase of the 3.5 acre original US Marshal Museum site from the USMM for \$200,000. The City has also approved a contract for the parking lot, site

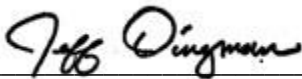
lighting, site grading & drainage, and infrastructure work at the site for about \$466,000. At this evening's meeting, the City's Board of Directors will consider a contract with American Ramp Company not to exceed \$600,000 for the design and construction of the skateboard and bicycle amenities on the property. Such amenities will provide challenges to various skill levels of skateboarders, bicyclists, and roller-bladers. There will also be an area for beginning bike riders at a strider-bike course. The design, still in its conceptual stages, incorporates an above-grade bridge feature into the design, which is taking into consideration its proximity to the Greg Smith River Trail amenity, as well as the River Park Events building. There will be no restrooms at the site, and operating hours are still to be determined, although they are likely to coordinate with those set for the Greg Smith River Trail.

Mr. Aldridge emphasized that the \$600,000 cost of the skate/bike site amenities has been raised from private or corporate sources and will build upon the publicly-funded property purchase and parking/infrastructure investment of the City of Fort Smith. A playground is still a possibility for the final design. Ms. Vick asked if the playground could be considered for inclusive activities for the disabled or handicapped. Mr. Aldridge replied that the design or concept of a playground had not yet been determined. The design would certainly meet the ADA requirements for accessibility and can still be evaluated as to what level of inclusiveness to provide. Even so, at this point funding may not be available for the playground amenity.

Mr. Bill Black of Fort Smith addressed the commissioners from the audience, noting that warmer weather will bring a resurgence of transients on the downtown district. He has noticed transients being bolder and more persistent when approaching pedestrians or asking for handouts, particularly in warmer months. Mr. Black suggested the CBID encourage more directed police activity downtown. Bobby Aldridge conveyed that the Downtown Merchants Association has made similar requests, and that the Fort Smith Police Department has responded by using plainclothes police officers in the downtown to focus on protection of businesses and shoppers during the holiday season, as well as run interference with transients when needed. A uniformed police presence would be a further deterrent. Mr. Jay Richardson of Fort Smith, speaking from the audience, noted that business owners in North Little Rock combined efforts to fund private security. Noting the CBID is sympathetic to the Merchants Association's concerns and those expressed by Mr. Black, Mr. White moved that the CBID formally request of the Chief of Police that he find it in the Police Department's operating budget to put uniformed street patrol officers on foot in the downtown district, particularly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings when many people are walking about downtown. Mr. Sicard seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the CBID Commission is scheduled for March 20, 2018. There being no additional business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeff Dingman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Jeff Dingman
Deputy City Administrator